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Act Against 'Counterspies'

If there isn't a law that bans the publication of the names of CIA agents and others performing secret missions for the U.S., there should be. Safeguarding security agents by forbidding disclosure of their foreign assignments should be part of an official secrets act. Violation should be no more permissible than publishing troop movements during wartime.

In the wake of the murder of Richard S. Welch, the CIA's station chief in Greece, the Central Intelligence Agency has asked the Department of Justice to determine whether federal laws were violated in connection with the publication of the identity of Welch and 149 other CIA station chiefs last year by the Organization Committee for the Fifth Estate which publishes the magazine, "Counterspy."

There is no question why the Fifth Estate group published the names of Welch and the other CIA agents: They wanted to subject them to reprisal from local people in the countries where the agents are assigned.

There is good possibility that Welch was

assassinated as a direct result of being fingered by this crummy assortment of anti-Americans.

In the same issue in which the CIA agents' names were listed, Philip Agee, the former CIA case officer whose recent book, *Inside the Company*; *CIA Diary*, also carried many names of former agency colleagues, advocated "the identification, exposure, and neutralization" of CIA agents abroad. He added: "Having this information, the peoples victimized by the CIA ... can bring pressure on their so-often compromised governments to expel the CIA people ... And in the absence of such expulsions ... the people themselves will have to decide what they must do to rid themselves of the CIA."

If that isn't a call to violence and an invitation to murder, then what is?

Unless the government shows some backbone and acts to protect the CIA from these traitorous "counterspies," it may find it difficult or impossible to get the caliber of men it needs.